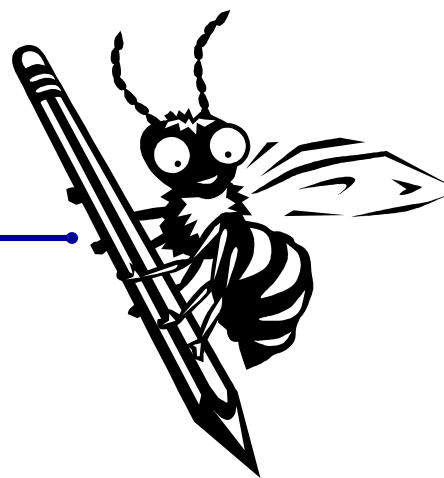


# Youth Services Notes



June 7, 2010, Issue 21

## Summer Learning

Summer has its own rhythm. It's the perfect time to try new activities, pique your child's curiosity about the world, and enrich literacy skills developed during the school year. And the longer days promise lots of extra time for pleasure reading. Here are 5 simple ways to stop the 'summer slide' and keep your kids actively learning through July and August.

### Build Background Knowledge, Side by Side

Children are full of questions about the world around them. Tap into your child's interests and start a journey of discovery together. For more information — [www.readingrockets.org/article/25723](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/25723)

### The Night Before the Museum: Get the Most Out of Field Trips

Whether you're going to the zoo, the museum, or a state park, there are a few "stops" to make before you get on your way. Note: First stop is the public library — [www.readingrockets.org/article/31910](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/31910)

### Rediscover Your Public Library

Here are 9 reasons to go visit your local library, where everything is free.

[www.readingrockets.org/article/30917](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/30917)

Download the new Resources at Your Library flyer for parents (in Spanish) from our sister site, Colorín Colorado.

[www.colorincolorado.org/article/37044](http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/37044)

### Open Up a Book Club

Family or community book clubs are social, low-key, and fun. You'll discover that you have lots to talk about as you dive into new books together. The active discussions are a great way to help strengthen comprehension skills, too. Useful tips on starting a book club from our friends at PBS Parents. [www.readingrockets.org/blog/36289](http://www.readingrockets.org/blog/36289)

### Crickets, Books, and Bach: Start a Summer Listening Program

In addition to a summer reading list, consider putting together a summer listening list, too. With more and more kids plugged into iPods and other audio devices, the importance of learning to listen and listening to learn is greater than ever.

[www.idonline.org/article/15904](http://www.idonline.org/article/15904)

from **Reading Rockets, June 2010 Newsletter**

[http://support.weta.org/site/MessageViewer?em\\_id=34541.0&dlv\\_id=36142](http://support.weta.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=34541.0&dlv_id=36142)

## Points of Interest

### Summer Reading Program Resources

are available for downloading from the Library of Virginia's Virginia Public Library Extranet

- ☒ Video Clips
- ☒ Radio announcement
- ☒ Music and lyrics
- ☒ Clip art

Storyteller and researcher **Jackie Baldwin** has compiled an amazing online book to help with the upcoming SRP, **Make a Splash!** Her resources are incredibly inclusive and will continue to be a useful resource for many years to come.

Karen Chace  
[www.storybug.net](http://www.storybug.net)

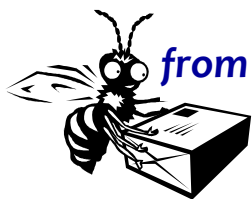
Here's a sample chapter:  
[www.story-lovers.com/watercycleoutline.html](http://www.story-lovers.com/watercycleoutline.html)

What did the number 0 say to the number 8?  
Nice belt!

What did one ocean say to the other ocean?

Nothing they just waved.

From A Prairie Home Companion Pretty Good Joke Book



from PubYac

## Teen Volunteers

Ask and ye shall receive!! A lot of great responses to my "Ideas for scheduling 70 Teen SRP Volunteers?" query. Sorry for the delay in posting this - lots of good stuff! Thank you SO MUCH for all of the great feedback, advice, and information -The Great Brain has done it again!

For anyone curious, I've decided to go with Volunteerspot.com . It sounds like the answer to my prayers! Shout-out to Jill Rothstein for introducing me to that! Hopefully this compilation isn't too late for those interested.

My SRP Volunteer Orientation is tomorrow. Here's to a great SRP, everyone!  
Thank you again!!

*Tera Forrest, Crowell Public Library*

There is a service called <http://tungle.me> that is really helpful for scheduling. It provides availability and people can sign up for shifts. I believe it's free - each person might have to register for an account. A little hi-tech but most kids are these days :)

I attended a conference that hosted a session about teen and tween volunteers. We currently don't use volunteers as registration handlers, prize givers, etc. but the librarians on the panel were great. I checked and they do have handouts on the website. The link is <http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/yss/wapldescriptions2010.htm> and the program is at the bottom of the page. The handouts include applications, schedule sample and a training manual. I hope these items can help you.

At my current job, the children's department basically isn't allowed to use volunteers of any age. We have teens who would love to do community service and a teen librarian who would love to set them up and supervise them, but no go. However, I did once upon a time work at a library that DID use teen volunteers for VRC. One thing I found helpful was to schedule more than one volunteer at a time--that made it more likely that someone would show up in the appointed slot and cut down on waiting time if more than volunteer came.

You've probably already thought of this, but I thought I'd mention it.

If you're managing 70, you're already doing great!! No big solutions, but just one little tho't.. i do have the teens and their parents sign a letter with our rules which include calling if you cannot make your shift... I also try to emphasize at orientation that I write good letters of recommendation when they need them... but they need to follow through on their commitments for me to be able to do that...

Another online management tool is [doodle.com](http://doodle.com).

Our volunteer co coordinator has applications available about 2 months ahead. The local middle and high school sponsors for national honor societies would make good contacts. They usually require kids to complete 20 hours of community service. After she rec all the applications. (there is a deadline date), she sets up interview times and gives them all the lowdown on commitment and responsibilities. She selects about 17 from the times and hours they can wk. We schedule for one and 1/2 hour shifts. per week She then schedules an orientation with them on one date and goes through straightening stacks, crafts, and appearance and the importance of keeping busy and not standing in front of staff waiting to be told what else they can do. :) She has t shirts made to let the public know they are volunteers. simple, minimum cost. Some vendors may give a donation or price break. Solid tee in one color or name tags w volunteer on it works well also. She gives out weekly volunteer awards for the keeping busy, attendance etc. Positive notes. At the end of the season she plans a party, We have a small budget for this. Our volunteer coordinator is a sub and works occasionally so she handles this very well.

Volunteers are wonderful when they show up, & dreadful when they don't. We have had our share of flakes, too -- and they were adults! It's too bad that the higher ups want you to continue to use volunteers who don't show up, do as their asked, or whatever. They may have forgotten (& the kids might not realize it) that these volunteers

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Upcoming Workshops



### Timeless Stories: Celebrating 25 Years of Children's Literature

June 28-July 2, 2010 at Shenandoah University

For more information, contact Dr. Karen Huff at [khuff@su.edu](mailto:khuff@su.edu) or call (540) 545-7215.

Cost \$595 - \$580 depending on credit desired. \$570 to audit, Plus lodging

### Creating Inviting Low Cost Teen Spaces

Wednesday, June 16 (3-4 pm) InfoPeople—Free

In this webinar, participants will: Evaluate current service for teens; Share ideas about programs for teens; Take a virtual tour of new teen spaces; Learn how to create an ambience that appeals to teens; Review seating, signage, acoustics, finish materials; and Share tips that promote teen involvement; Discover the practicalities and pitfalls of creating spaces for teens. For more information or to attend the webinar, go to the link on the day of the program:

[http://infopeople.org/training/webcasts/webcast\\_data/286/index.html](http://infopeople.org/training/webcasts/webcast_data/286/index.html)

### ALSC Workshops

Registration is now open for ALSC's Summer Online Education Courses! Courses are taught asynchronously using Moodle, an online learning community. A certificate of completion will be sent to participants upon successful completion of the course. Detailed descriptions and registration information is available on the ALSC Web site

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/edcareers/profdevelopment/alscweb/index.cfm>

Fees are \$95 for personal ALSC members; \$145 for personal ALA members; and \$165 for non-members. For more information, contact ALSC Deputy Director Kirby Simmering at [ksimmering@ala.org](mailto:ksimmering@ala.org).

- Children with Disabilities in the Library
- Information Literacy-From Preschool to High School
- Introduction to Graphic Novels for Children
- Out of this World Youth Programming
- Reading Instruction and Children's Books

The Library of Virginia will reimburse up to 12 people for each course who complete the class and share the information presented in the class with at least two other library systems. Please contact Enid at [enid.costley@lva.virginia.gov](mailto:enid.costley@lva.virginia.gov) if you wish to participate.

### Virginia Peninsula Literary Consortium

**Orson Scott Card**, the best-selling author of "Ender's Game," will speak at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 28, at



Christopher Newport University's Ferguson Center for the Arts. His appearance is free to the public, but tickets are required.

Free tickets for the author talk, question-and-answer session and book signing are available beginning Sept. 28 at the sponsoring libraries of the Virginia Peninsula Literary Consortium, which consists of the public libraries of Newport News, Hampton, Poquoson and York County and the academic libraries of Christopher Newport University, Hampton University and Thomas Nelson Community College. Tickets will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis and limited to two per person while supplies last. Open seating at the event, to be held in the Music

& Theatre Hall, is limited, and attendees are advised to arrive early. Ticket holders will be seated first. Any remaining seats will then be open to the general public.

For more information, contact Karen L. Gill, community relations and programs coordinator for the Newport News Public Library System, at 757-926-1357, or [kgill@nngov.com](mailto:kgill@nngov.com) or visit <http://library.cnu.edu/vplc.html>

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## Teen Volunteers

represent the library just as much as any staff member when they are working with the public.

This sounds like a lot of work for you. Is there one of the teens who has been helping out longer than the others, has shown himself/herself to be dependable, etc., who could help by being the volunteer coordinator?

Our volunteers fill out applications, listing days & times available. We schedule them based on that, since that's when they said they wanted to come. If someone does not show up for the time they promised to be here, we call them -- are they okay? did they forget? would another time work better for them? After the 3rd time of not showing up, we do not use them again. I know this sounds harsh, especially when you're wanting to woo teens to help at the library & make the library a welcoming place for them. However, this volunteer activity is also a way for teens to learn a work ethic, to learn & enhance their people skills, to learn how to contribute to their community.

Point out to the higher ups the amount of staff time spent in scheduling and orienting your volunteers; to have some not follow through is a waste of a valuable resource -- you.

70 volunteers???!!! Good Heavens!!! Do you break them down in manageable sizes? If not I would recommend that you give them a minimum number of hours to work (10 - 15) over a 3 to 4 week period. I would also follow through with your threat that if they don't work, they don't come back. Your administration might not be happy about that but once they understand the time it takes for you to deal with those who are not working and how little you get from them, they may change their mind.

I have around that many volunteers myself. I make up daily schedules with empty slots and put two weeks worth at a time in a binder that is kept at the circulation desk. The kids sign them selves up and all know that every Monday, a new week is put out. My kids have a three strike rule, if they are late or don't show up for a shift three times, then they don't volunteer again that summer. I also have an emergency list of kids that I can call when I have a last minute drop out. The kids put down when they are available on that list, so I can contact a kid that is available. Hope that helps. I like your Google idea, is there a way to set it so things can not be erased? Or they can view it on line but have to call in if they want to be put on the schedule?



Absolutely fire volunteers! Try to appeal to your higher ups by saying that this really is like a job or internship (especially if they are running your SRP!). Most companies would not allow interns to flake out, and neither should you! I have told volunteers that they are not welcome back the next year, or told them that they are finished for this summer in fact, and it's not easy, but when you are relying on them for help, they need to understand and be responsible for their actions.

I personally schedule hours for the whole summer, granted I only have 20 volunteers. I am thinking about having all the parents sign off on the schedule, though. I really like to keep things between myself and the volunteer because I think it makes them more responsible, but it helps when the parents know what's going on as well.

If you're looking for a free online volunteer scheduling system, take a look at [volunteerspot.com](http://volunteerspot.com) I've just started using it to run another group I'm involved in, and it lets only the organizer edit shifts. I really recommend it so far.

I thought I had my hands full with 20 volunteers for our Summer Reading party day! Just in case my method might spark ideas for you, I'll let you know how I do it. I use excel to create a schedule listing volunteers as V1, V2, V3, etc. That way if someone fails to show up, I can just tell whomever is here "you work the V2 schedule". I have about 10 different stations or jobs for the volunteers that go from 9:30am until 8pm, so I like to move the volunteer to a new job every 30 or 60 minutes. Makes it difficult to schedule, but more fun for the teens. Employees are also part of the schedule and I normally list a few as floaters to cover any gaps in volunteers schedules. For my small number of

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## Teen Volunteers

volunteers, I simply print the Excel sheet for each one to carry around so they know where to go next. As far as when they can volunteer, I usually have shift options for them and work with them if they can't exactly commit to a shift. This is done by email/phone. I love your idea of a google calendar. Too bad about the sabotage!

Our SRP volunteer program sounds very similar to yours. We get around 100 volunteers who do the same things you mentioned below. We have volunteer applications and mandatory training sessions. Volunteers may sign up for shifts at the training session. We do our scheduling old school and print a schedule created in Excel and have teens manually write in their names for shifts. There is a limit to how many shifts one can initially sign up for as there is a lot of competition for volunteer hours. I've attached a copy for you.

We put out two week's worth of schedules at a time and they go out one week ahead of time (actually, it's nine days and goes out Saturday morning).

Parents practically line up outside the day the new schedule goes out to sign up their teens! If there are any gaps, we start calling around to see if anyone can cover. We enter our volunteers into an Access database so that we can lookup who has listed themselves to be "on-call" in case we need coverage at the last minute. This database also allows us to make nametags, pull email addresses for mass mailings and help us make form letters at the end of the program listing total volunteer hours worked for the teens.

I used to work at a library where I scheduled 60 "teen" volunteers, they had to have finished fifth grade. Most of them were 6th and 7th graders. We treated it like a job. They filled out applications. They also had a mandatory orientation. We tried to accomodate their schedules, but if there wasn't a time they wanted, they didn't work. They could put down two choices of times they would like to work. Also, if they didn't show up or had attitude issues, they were asked not to come back( this rarely happened). Each year, they had to reapply. We had a limited number of spots and not everyone got to work. We had a waiting list. Sometimes it didn't work out and we needed a replacement. They were scheduled 2 at a time for 2 hours a week, the same two hours each week. Their main duty was Summer Reading Program. We could not have done it without them Good luck!

At my previous library we also had a big volunteer group and we mostly had them schedule themselves. We had a big binder with 1hour slots for everyday of the program and we encouraged kids to sign up for 2 hours at a time. They had to complete a total of 8 hours of time over the summer or they would not get a certificate of completion. We checked the schedule hourly to make sure that the assigned teen "signed in". If they didn't, we called them at home. We also kept track in a notebook of who didn't show up. Hope that's helpful!

I feel your pain! What I've resorted to with my teens is requiring that they contact me 24 hours ahead of when they would like to volunteer. They can call, email or come in person, but they need to get an ok from me before they come in. This may limit the number of willing volunteers, but it teaches them responsibility. On the flip side, it does create a lot of work for me, but it also allows me to plan my week because I know when the teens are coming. I find that if they are willing to contact me about coming in, they hardly ever don't show up.

As to your problem with "flakes", maybe you could try a "three strikes and you're out" deal. I know what it is like to deal with those "higher ups", but you might try this strategy (if you haven't already).

Let those "higher ups know"... It's more than an inconvenience or stress on library staff, when a volunteer does not show up for work, or acts inappropriately... is a disservice to the teens themselves. Even if teens are "just volunteers", they are depended on, and have a responsibility to do what is asked of them.

Even if a teen shows up for a scheduled time, but shows inappropriate behavior, it is a disservice to our patrons, whom they are serving while on duty. Don't our youngest patrons signing up for SRP deserve good service too?

These volunteer opportunities for teens are preparing them for when they enter the workforce. They will be expected to be on time, dress and act accordingly, etc. What are we teaching them if we let them get away with not showing up to work, etc.? In the real world, they'd be fired. So, lets give them a warning or two, and then give them the structure they deserve...that way they'll be prepared for the real world. Good luck.

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## Teen Volunteers

I hear your pain! I coordinate 150 volunteers. I found a method that works but am always looking for improvement. Please share with me any responses you get. Here's what we do. First we had to split our volunteers into two sessions. Session A works the first four weeks and Session B works the last four weeks with the one week in the middle overlapped with ALL the teens. It worked pretty well last year so we are doing it again this year. The teens all attend training, we encourage the parents (drivers/calendar keepers) to attend the last 10 minutes to listen to scheduling instructions and shift sign-ups. We have the teens sign up for the following week. We allow everyone to sign up for two shifts per week; then once everyone has a chance (equal opportunity) teens can sign up for any other open shifts. They can work one 2 hour shift per day and up to 7 per week. They don't have to sign up for the same day/time each week.

We also have around 70 volunteers in the summer. We keep a binder with individual time-sheets for each of our volunteers. In the front pocket of the binder is a master schedule with all of the time slots for the week. The librarian writes the names of the kids in the correct time slots in pencil, so that she can make changes when necessary. The volunteers do not write their own names on this grid. If they need to change their schedules, they ask the librarian, who then makes the changes on the grid. The volunteers sign in and out on their own separate time sheets in the presence of a librarian, who then initials their recorded times. We've never found it to be a problem doing scheduling this way. I can't imagine our volunteers having the freedom to choose and switch their own schedules; I would think that might get out of hand quickly. Usually, the volunteers are fine with the times they originally choose, but if they have to change, we just erase their names and write them in another time slot. Our volunteers come in 2 hours per week, the same time every week. We want them to treat volunteering like a job, so we ask that they call to tell us when they can't make it.

Summers are very busy, and training and supervising so many volunteers takes up a lot of time. We've done things a little differently each of the past few summers, but haven't yet come up with an "ideal" way of handling so many volunteers. One thing that seems to help is to have no more than two volunteers start each new shift. This way, we don't have to spend too much time getting the "new shift" started on tasks. We also limit the total number of volunteers in the library at one time. Another problem is volunteers waiting to be assigned a new task when the librarian is busy. We tried to solve this problem by assigning each volunteer a section of the book shelves to maintain throughout the summer (shelf reading, straightening, checking condition of books, etc.) - this way, if the librarian is busy with a patron, the volunteer who has finished an assigned task, can check his shelves while waiting for the librarian to be free again. We have had our share of problem volunteers too. Some "problems" are easier to deal with than others, but in the few cases that volunteers were actually undermining the work of others, we had to speak to them and tell them that they would have to stop volunteering if their behavior did not improve. A few of them decided to stop volunteering, and others continued to volunteer with improved behavior. But, the overwhelming majority of our volunteers have been great. Some have volunteered for years, need little supervision, and can be depended upon to more involved tasks. Let me know if you have any other questions.

Also, if you have any strategies regarding volunteers that work really well for you, I'd love to hear them. We're always trying to think of new ways to run our volunteer program more efficiently. We don't have a foolproof system, but I thought I'd share what we've done in the past, and I hope you'll post a compilation of suggestions that you receive.

We've tried the poster board-sized calendar, we've tried scheduling the teens ourselves and keeping a master copy at our desk... Each summer we try to tweak our method a little bit. Last summer, we farmed the whole dreadful task out to a teen volunteer and had moderate success. I set up a Survey Monkey page ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) to find out what the teens' availability was. Our teen volunteer coordinator was able to log in to Survey Monkey and export the info to Excel, then play with it. She set up an e-mail distribution list for all the volunteers and e-mailed



## Volunteer Services

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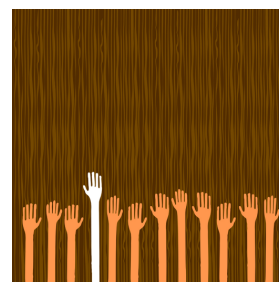
## Teen Volunteers

them copies of the schedule as attachments. It worked pretty well, but if you decide to give this method a try, these would be my tips:

Make sure you pick a teen who going to be really, really independent. We thought we had one, but she made me a little nuts with the daily updates and questions, all via e-mail, multiple times a day. I'd try to require the person to come in once in a while to go over any issues in person.

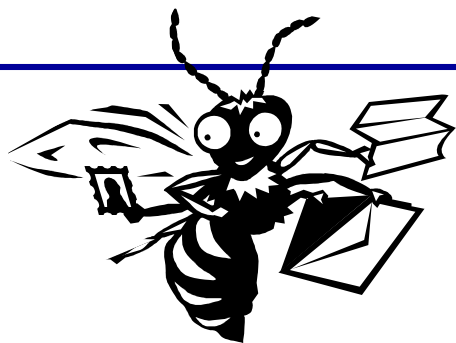
Make no assumptions about what will seem like logical scheduling rules to your volunteer coordinator. I had to make the rule that once one person was scheduled and informed of his schedule, the volunteer coordinator could not change that person's schedule unless that person needed to make a change. It seemed obvious to me, but the volunteer coordinator felt a lot of pressure to fit everyone in and accommodate volunteers who registered late. If possible, post PDFs of the schedule on a wiki that the volunteers and staff can view. That way, there's no confusion about which copy of the schedule is the most recent. Good luck with whatever you decide! I look forward to hearing about what other libraries are trying.

We have about 70 volunteers also for our 7 week program. We have an orientation usually one to two weeks before the program begins. This summer our program will begin June 23 and our orientation is on June 16. I have already sent out invitations to the kids that worked for us last summer. In reference to the ones you want to weed out, I just don't send the invitation to them. But if they contact me in reference to it, then I send them one. Included with the invitation is a volunteer interest sheet. I created shifts based on the days and times we are opened. We no longer have registration and check in done on the weekends because 90% of the time the children's librarian and I do not work weekends in the summer and we were having issues of volunteers not showing up and the circ staff was having to make things up as they went along to check kids in. :) We do not guarantee who the kids work with, with the exception of siblings. Nine times out of ten the volunteers work with their friends but we just don't guarantee that. We also ask for their vacation dates so that we do not schedule them during that time. I ask that the interest sheets be sent back to the library ASAP or the volunteers can bring them to the orientation. I also tell them the earlier they get them back to me, the better chance they have of getting the shift and day they want. We ask which day of the week and which shift they want as their first, second third and fourth choices. We usually schedule four volunteers per shift. Then this is the day and shift they work all summer. Due to the number of volunteers, I let the kids know that in the beginning they will all be guaranteed one day and one shift. Once the schedule starts to fill in, sometimes I need help on other days and shifts and the older volunteers usually ask to fill them in. Once the schedule is done, I create a PDF file and email it to all the volunteers. Then the day before the start of the program, I usually call the volunteers that are on the first few days to make sure they received the schedule and are ready to start. It does get a bit tough on me in the beginning trying to schedule everyone on the days and shifts they want. But once it is set, it runs as smoothly as it can with middle school volunteers. :) Also, I do the schedule in Excel, the invite in publisher and the interest sheet in word. Please feel free to use any format if you like one. We have scheduled the volunteers this way for the last five summers, and with the exception of a few flakes, it does run smoothly with no complaints from the volunteers generally.



I work in a large branch and we have approximately 50 teens 11 and older volunteer. We have 2 meetings and 1 needs to be attended and the volunteer application needs to be filled out and signed by a parent before they can begin. We allow each to select 3 dates to volunteer at the meeting and after that they can schedule additional days. We don't schedule anyone but let teens schedule their own time. We like 2 people per hour for the 8 weeks and we will be open Sundays so we're asking for volunteers to help then. Our biggest complaint is getting them to call when they can't work so we can arrange for a sub.

I've had similar problems in the past. I'm going to try having the volunteers sign up each Friday afternoon for the next week. We have a teen movie on Friday afternoon, and then I'll have a volunteer meeting to explain the volunteer assignments for the next week and let them sign up. If nothing else, maybe it will increase participation in the movies and transition into an advisory council for fall.



### Notes from the Desk of the Children's and Youth Services Consultant

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## Kudos

### Newport News Public Library

*In American Libraries, June/July 2010, page 25.*

### Buchanan County Public Library

Kids get to "fish" after they complete lines in their reading log. Staff will be the "sharks" inside (complete with hats) the pond putting prizes on their cane fishing poles! The pond goes around the orange pole.



## ALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION



**DC**  
**2010**  
JUNE 24 - 29

This year at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., the Public Library Association (PLA) will be offering attendees a rare opportunity to meet one-on-one with a library consultant for free. On June 26 and June 28, more than 25 consultants will be available for half-hour sessions to talk through pressing concerns for library professionals today—from planning and managing a building to serving a diverse community. Appointments will be available:

Saturday, June 26, 8 a.m.-noon: Hilton Washington-Independence Room

Monday, June 28, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.: Hilton Washington-Fairchild Room

Information about each consultant, including area of expertise, availability, and contact information

<http://www.pla.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plaevents/plaataalaannual/PLA@ALA-ConsultantDe.pdf>

To schedule a free session, please contact the consultant directly **before June 15, 2010.**

If you have any questions about the Consultation Sessions please contact Paula Singer at (410) 561-7561 or [pmsinger@singergrp.com](mailto:pmsinger@singergrp.com) or Linda Bostrom, PLA at [lbostrom@ala.org](mailto:lbostrom@ala.org).

For more information on the ALA conference

<http://www.ala.org/ala/conferencesevents/upcoming/annual/generalinformation/index.cfm>